

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ALGIER 00110 191548Z

43

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAM-01 AID-05 DHA-02 ORM-02 IO-11 FDRE-00

/096 W

----- 035624

R 191435Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TORUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3660

INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY RABAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 0110

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SS, AG, MO, MR, SP

SUBJECT: SAHARA: ALGERIAN OBSERVATIONS

1. IN LONG TOUR D'HORIZON JANUARY 16, SECREATRY GENERAL OF FOREIGN MINISTRY, ABDELMALEK BENHABYLES, SPEAKING IN HIS USUAL PHILOSOPHICAL TERMS, MADE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS REGARDING SAHARA.

2. THERE HAD BEEN NO JURIDICAL BASIS FOR MADRID ACCORD. SPAIN HAD TURNED ITS BACK ON ITS SOLEMN OBLIGATIONS TO UN AND SAHARAN PEOPLE AND HAD IGNORED FINDINGS OF ICJ. JUST SOLUTION REQUIRED THAT THERE BE CONSULTATION WITH PEOPLE CONCERNED. WHILE AGREEMENT HAD APPARENTLY ENVISAGED CONSULTATION WITH JEMAA, TWO-THIRDS OF LATTER HAD RALLIED TO POLISARIO. NO SAHAROUIS OF CONSEQUENCE LEFT TO VOTE FOR MOROCCANS.

3. MOROCCANS AND MAURITANIANS NOW IN OCCUPATION. LAST SHRED OF SPANISH AUTHORITY WOULD BE REMOVED FEBRUARY 28 AND THEN WHAT? AN ESTIMATED 35 TO 40 THOUSAND SAHARAOUIS HAD

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ALGIER 00110 191548Z

FLED MOROCCAN OCCUPATION. WHICHEVER OF THE MANY FIGURES ONE

USED FOR TOTAL SAHARAN POPULATION, THIS WAS A MAJOR PORTION OF IT. HE HAD TALKED TO REPRESENTATIVE OF UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES WHO HAD SAID THAT NUMBER ON ALGERIAN SIDE OF LINE CLOSER TO 15 THAN THE 20 THOUSAND ALGERIANS CLAIMING, BUT WHO HAD ALSO SAID THIS WAS NO STAGED PRODUCTION BUT A REAL FLIGHT OF REFUGEES.

4. RESISTANCE NOW IN PLACE. NATIONAL COUNCIL WOULD PROVIDE LEADERSHIP AND MORAL BASIS. SUCH MOVEMENTS TENDED TO EXPAND AND GROW, PARTICULARLY WHEN POPULAR SUPPORT WAS AS EVIDENT AS IT WAS IN THIS CASE. UNFORTUNATELY, MATTER MIGHT WELL GET OUT OF HAND AND SITUATION IN BORDER AREAS WAS DANGEROUS.

5. PROBLEM WAS HOW TO FIND PEACEFUL SOLUTION. WAY MUST BE FOUND TO LET PEOPLE OF SAHARA EXPRESS THEIR CHOICE. TRADITIONAL AND MOST SUITABLE MACHINERY FOR DOING THIS WAS UNITED NATIONS. JEMAA, WHICH WAS THEORETICAL OPTION, WAS NOT FUNCTIONING. HE SHRUGGED SHOULDERS IN GESTURE OF DISCOURAGEMENT.

6. BENHABYLES THEN SAID MUCH ATTENTION HAD BEEN DIRECTED AT SHIPMENT OF U.S. ARMS TO MOROCCO. I SAID WE HAD LONG-STANDING FMS AGREEMENT WITH MOROCCO BUT QUANTITY OF ARMS INVOLVED MODEST. BENHABYLES SAID QUANTITY THEY RECEIVING WAS NEVERTHELESS IMPORTANT, PARTICULARLY GIVEN FACT MOROCCANS ALREADY BETTER ARMED THAN ALGERIA, PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TANKS (SIC). I NOTED THAT MOROCCANS HAD LEFT MOST OF THEIR SOVIET TANKS IN SYRIA FOLLOWING RAMADAN WAR. BENHABYLES SAID THEY COULD NOT HAVE SENT MANY TO SYRIA, THEY HAD NOT TRANSITED ALGERIA. I SAID TO CONTRARY TANKS HAD BEEN SHIPPED VIA OUJDA AND ORAN. THIS SEEMED TO SURPRISE HIM.

7. BENHABYLES THEN SAID THAT IMPORTANT FIGURE WAS ALGERIA'S REALLY SMALL MILITARY BUDGET (UNDER 5 PERCENT), MUCH OF WHICH WENT TO FINANCE LARGE CIVIC WORKS PROGRAM. I SAID DISCUSSION OF MILITARY CAPABILITIES BETWEEN TWO ARAB STATES HAD NIGHTMARISH QUALITY AND I THOUGHT ALL SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON PEACEFUL SOLUTION.

8. BENHABYLES AGREED AND CONCLUDED THAT SPAIN HAD MADE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ALGIER 00110 191548Z

SERIOUS MISTAKE. IT HAD GONE BACK ON ITS WORD OF HONOR BECAUSE IT HAD CALCULATED THAT MOST OF ARAB WORLD WAS SUPPORTING MOROCCO ON THIS ISSUE AND THAT ITS ARAB POLICY WOULD NOT SUFFER. SPANISH WERE WRONG. THIRD WORLD TOOK WORD OF HONOR VERY SERIOUSLY. THIRD WORLD STATES WOULD NOT FORGET SPANISH PERFORMANCE.

9. COMMENT: BENHABYLES IS SECOND SENIOR ALGERIAN (OTHER

WAS HAMDANI WHO HAS ALLUDED TO POSSIBILITY THAT RATIFICATION
BY JEMAA COULD CONCEIVABLY HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED CON-
SULTATION WITH PEOPLE OF SAHARA. WHILE THIS NOW SEEMS VERY
REMOTE, AND WAS REJECTED BY ALGERIANS AT TIME OF MADRID
ACCORD BECAUSE JEMAA WAS NOT REPRESENTATIVE, WE NOTE FROM
RABAT'S 246 THAT MOROCCANS STILL SEEM INTERESTED IN HAVING
MEMBERS OF JEMAA COME TO RABAT AND SWEARING FEALTY.
THIS BODY JUST MIGHT PROVIDE VEHICLE FOR CON-
PROMISE SETTLEMENT SOMETIME IN FUTURE IF NOT NOW.PARKER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GarlanWA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976ALGIER00110
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760019-1031
From: ALGIERS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760146/aaaabogg.tel
Line Count: 124
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GarlanWA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 OCT 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 OCT 2003 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <27 OCT 2003 by GarlanWA>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SAHARA: ALGERIAN OBSERVATIONS
TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, SS, AG, MO, MR, SP
To: n/a
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006